

TURF--SELLING STAKE AT FAIR GROUNDS--BROWNS TO BE REORGANIZED

"PLUNGER" JOE YEAGER'S FEATURE OF THE HEAVY RACE-TRACK BETTORS

Youthful Speculator Has Made Himself Prominent in All Branches of Racing Game and Is Already Under Observation of Eastern Track Stewards, Who Object to Heavy Wagering as Drawing Unpleasant Notoriety to the Sport.

The latest plunger to loom up on the race-track horizon, both in California and the East, is "Joe" Yeager, the "Boy Plunger." Right well does he deserve the sobriquet. In the first place, he is round-faced and boyish in aspect. In the second place, he can plunge harder and faster on a horse race than anybody has ever plunged before.

To be sure, the "plunger" may land him on the reefs of adversity sooner or later, but with that event we have at present nothing to do. Just now "Joe" Yeager is on the rise. He is the plunger of the season—the successful gambler who cannot go wrong, according to dope prophets.

Horses have run money into the bank for him. They have bought land and built him houses and lots. They have stuffed his pockets with stocks and bonds. And around him as he sits on his high stool counting other people's money until it becomes his own, sit the wreaths of other days.

Riley Graman, once the greatest plunger on the turf, Mike Dwyer, who used to bet \$50,000 in a race, Steve L. Thompson, who went up like a rocket, and other great betting masters who are now light-houses of warning against the fever have no deterring effect on Yeager.

TOOK THE GAME NATURALLY

He was born to the game. It is his instinctive trade, and perhaps it is this fact which makes him so uniformly successful. He has not come up like a rocket, and he has carefully husbanded the gathered snow. Like "Pittsburgh Phil," Yeager invests his superior cash in enterprises that even the stewards of the Jockey Club could not object to.

When Yeager was a mere youth in Cincinnati his father thought the occupation of a dry goods clerk would about fit Joe, the young man's diagnosis. He was not to be deterred. He worked at the trade about a week, in the meantime evincing no interest in any customer who could not "talk business." While measuring ribbon he was figuring on past performances. This was not in the dry goods business, so Joe was forced to quit. Thereby the dry goods trade lost a star and the turf gained a great plunger.

A STUDYING BIG PLUNGER

He began his career by coming to New York with enough dollars to state off plunger for a while and got a position with Joe Ullman, the bookmaker. This was some ten years ago. Here he remained for several years during which time he was treasuring up experience as a miser hoards gold.

Likewise thousands of others, he noted the success of Riley Graman and of "Pittsburgh Phil," the latter the most successful gambler that ever pined a bookmaker. He knew Graman's plunges were mainly luck and that sooner or later that young man would go to the wall. He saw Mike Dwyer, a nifty man, but headstrong, slide from the summit to the base of the hill. He watched "Pittsburgh Phil," a man after his own heart, Phil would never get without reliable information. He would not fly in the face of Providence and trust to chance any more than he was obliged to. Phil also invested his winnings legitimately in houses, built and owned hotels and houses, and so on.

"Pittsburgh Phil" is a phenomenon in playing the game. He has staked the test and stress of a plunger's career longer than any other plunger on the turf. He has been resting money from the bookmaker's office since he was twelve years old. He is their relentless enemy. Year in and year out he continues to bet thousands of dollars on a race, and he today is the only old-time plunger who continues to be successful. Each season he wins a fortune.

HIS FIRST BIG COUP

So it was that Joe Yeager took "Pittsburgh Phil" for a model, and so it is that he has now hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in legitimate enterprises. For a long while the winnings of Yeager did not amount to much. It took him some time to mount his old plunger and arrive at the 100-foot stage of success. In the meantime, however, he was building his fortune steadily and was beginning to attract the attention of the bookmakers.

He gathered about him men who could sell a fit horse a mile through the lenses of New Orleans two years ago, having about \$10,000 in his pocket, he cut loose and began his wonderfully successful career.

About Christmas time Yeager went to the hands of the New Orleans poolrooms, making up bets on Frank M. Kelly's 3-year-old, Riley Athlete. The average odds

were 10 to 1 and Yeager had placed about \$5,000 on the horse. He went to the post. Athlete surprised everybody by not cutting up at the post, with his under-carry action, and was off in the first flight when the barrier went up.

STARTS HIS FIRST BOOK

Yeager was apparently the most unconcerned man at the track as he stood watching the filly race head and head with Mrs. Frank Foster to the home stretch. At that point the latter discovered that Yeager was not betting on the horse he had been looking so many years. The natural thing for Yeager to do after collecting his horse was to start a book. He did so, and before the meeting was over had cleared up \$15,000.

He won in California and in Hot Springs. He won heavily and regularly in Saratoga. All together he cleared up \$50,000 in winnings last year, making his total stake about \$75,000. As yet, however, he had attracted no particular attention on the part of the stewards.

The plunging at Saratoga was so steep and high that the stewards could not take any account of him without taking notice of those whom they seem to regard as legitimate millionaires. In contradiction to the usual rule, Yeager's fortunes through his horse love.

At the Saratoga meeting which so greatly increased Yeager's bank account, John A. Drake won \$50,000; Senator McArthur, \$20,000; John J. Gates, \$15,000; George Wheelock, \$10,000; and "Pittsburgh Phil," \$5,000.

OVER THE MILLION MARK

Yet during that very season the stewards "disciplined" Phil on account of his heavy betting and allowed the others to go. Phil has been disciplined ever since. "Pittsburgh Yeager" took the scratch at the beginning of the present season about \$100,000 to the good. Since then he has increased this by about one quarter. Besides what he has won in his book, he has won about \$100,000 on his outside bets.

A cucumber in money he is not to be compared with Yeager's impressive demeanor during the running of an important race.

Like "Pittsburgh Phil," he is utterly imperturbable. Apparently he puts his money down and forgets it. The antics of the shouting thousands about him are meaningless. Those thousands constitute one type of mankind. Yeager is another.

It is a strange fact that there was never yet a grasshopper, jumping and bounding, that could outstep him. He is all of just that cool, quiet, imperturbable disposition.

In his early days Mike Dwyer would sit in the judges' stand gazing calmly over the track seemingly indifferent whether his horse won \$50,000 or lost it. Dwyer lost his fortune in that same calm and passionless way.

John J. Ryan, too, has won several fortunes on the track, only to toss the money back where it came from. But Ryan had a peculiarly quick eye. "Pittsburgh Phil" nor Yeager possess. He is fond of diamonds and wears several which are even by name "Diamond Jim." Brady's sparkles look like tallow candles.

Generally speaking, the career of a race-track plunger is brief and feverish. He wins a fortune, flares up like a pilot's light to attract other eyes, and then he is away and is seen no more at the race track.

"Plunger" Walton was a good illustration of the class. Walton won a million, bought land and houses, built and owned hotels and houses, and so on. He went for about three years. Then he went down with a crash and the wave rolled on.

STRENGTHENED BY THE WAGONER. "Pittsburgh Phil" is a phenomenon in playing the game. He has staked the test and stress of a plunger's career longer than any other plunger on the turf.

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Last season he came under the eye of the stewards for heavy betting and was "ruled off" without success. They were on the youngest candidate for celebrity, Joe Yeager. He has been "warned."

When The Pickett and the Brooklyn Handicap Yeager got himself discomfited. He fancied The Pickett and held the horse out in his book. When the others were

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